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ABSTRACT

This paper presents four major teacher education reform thrusts in the United States, touching on several important characteristics of the U.S. context for teacher education: the locus of control for education; both private and public control over teacher education; the loss of faith in education; disagreement over whether teacher education needs more or less regulation; and the absence of a master plan for the reform of U.S. teacher education. The four major reform thrusts are standards and accountability, alternative teacher certification, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The paper concludes with a set of 11 assertions that grew out of an analysis of the four reform thrusts. Also presented are 12 questions which may help teacher educators address the policy issues that have grown out of the U.S. experience in teacher education reform. (Contains 33 references.) (SM)

Teacher Education Reform in the United States:
Thrusts, Assumptions, and Implications

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It is always perilous to try to draw parallels between teacher education in one country and that in another. Differences in institutions, culture, and traditions all serve to reinforce varieties in teacher education across national boundaries. In addition, teacher education tends to be such a massive enterprise -- in the United States about 1,300 institutions of higher education prepare teachers, and 50 states have authority over teacher education -- that merely keeping this enterprise afloat and operating is a significant accomplishment, let alone thinking about the experience of another country might be relevant to rethinking teacher education. So, a word of caution is important at the outset.

Yet the gradual globalization of many aspects of life seems likely to affect teacher education, particularly in countries which are increasingly interconnected through media and electronic communication as well as by cross-national companies and international trade. As a result, I think it conceivable that descriptions and analyses of teacher education reforms in the United States may be of interest to teacher educators in New South Wales. However, before identifying four reform thrusts in the United States, I want to briefly comment on several important characteristics of the U.S. context for teacher education -- the locus of control for education (including teacher education), both private and public control over teacher education, the loss of faith in education (and teacher education), disagreement over

whether teacher education needs more or less regulation, and the absence of a master plan for the reform of U.S. teacher education.

The U.S. Context for Teacher Education Reform

Citizens of the United States idealize our localistic origins. Images of the frontier town, the New England town meeting, the small Midwestern community, and the one-room school house persist in our nation's folklore. Our founding fathers took care in our Constitution to reserve power over education (including teacher education) to the individual states, and well into the 20th century local school boards had a lot of autonomy from the state control of education, let alone any kind of federal involvement in education (except for the gathering of educational statistics). Yet, at the close of the 20th century, we are experiencing pressures to centralize kindergarten through high school education, though control over education -- particularly in the area of curriculum -- remains firmly lodged with the individual states.

In teacher education, fundamental control has always been with the individual states (or local school boards in the 19th century), and the primary lever of control has been state regulation of the requirements for teacher licensure. During the last half century, however, a national role developed in teacher education through the creation of a private national accrediting

agency: the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). NCATE is broadly representative of K-12 teachers, university-based teacher educators, and members of such subject matter professional groups as the National Science Teachers Association; NCATE has no formal links to the public or to state governments. Largely due to its private nature, NCATE accreditation is voluntary, and about 500 of the teacher preparation institutions in the U.S. have their programs nationally accredited. The struggle for control of teacher education, therefore, is a mixture of two forms of tension -- state versus national, and public versus private.

In recent years these tensions have increased as teacher education has more and more been seen to be in need of reform. The attack on education occurred first at the elementary and secondary levels, initiated by the well-known 1983 report, A Nation at Risk, which used the devastating phrase "a rising tide of mediocrity" to characterize the public schools. The status of K-12 teachers went from middling to low. Not surprisingly, teacher educators -- those who prepare K-12 teachers -- have also been the target of many recent attacks. Among the charges leveled against teacher educators/teacher education are that prospective teachers are intellectually weak students, that professors of education are impractical and out of touch with schooling, and that teacher education programs lack rigor and coherent design (Tom, 1997). Recent attempts to reform teacher

education (and K-12 education) in the U.S. attempt to address these widely accepted criticisms (Valli & Rennert-Ariev, in press).

Central to the character of these recent reform efforts is the history of teacher education as a highly regulated industry, much like the public utilities or the airline industry (both of which have been deregulated recently in the U.S.). On the one hand, establishment approaches to teacher education reform (promoted by NCATE, many teacher educators, teachers' unions, among others) tend to rely on developing new regulations which try to insure higher quality teachers (higher admissions standards for students, more field work in programming, a focus on the performance of candidates rather than the content they study). This approach is very much in line with past attempts to reform teacher education in which bureaucratic regulations are seen as the key instrument to engender reform.

The difficulty with this approach -- much as is the case with other highly regulated industries -- is that teacher educators are likely to become very cautious, and respond incrementally to new regulations. Such minimalist responses only seem to point out the need for yet further and more dramatic regulatory thrusts, which in turn are responded to by teacher educators in timid ways. Increased regulation is more likely to induce compliance than to inspire creativity.

A second response to reforming teacher education presumes

that teacher educators themselves are the core of the problem. Rather than attempting to further regulate teacher education, this camp -- not really a coherent group, but rather mixed clusters of business people, conservative activists, disenchanted teacher educators, and others -- propose some form of deregulation for teacher education. Some (certain conservative activists) see the extensive regulations surrounding teacher licensure as a way for teacher educators to maintain their jobs, while forcing prospective teachers to study impractical and ideological approaches to pedagogy. What is needed, according to this group of activists, is the opportunity for more open access to teaching, that is, alternative licensure. This group wants to circumvent the teacher education establishment, viewed by these activists as incapable of reforming itself. Others (some disenchanted teacher educators) lament the huge amount of work which is needed to meet new reform regulations, the tendency for national accreditation and state regulations to be in conflict, and the likelihood that almost all programs ultimately will be approved rather than just those of the "highest" quality. This group often calls for teacher educators to create dramatically different models of teacher education and development. (I often find myself in this group.) Still others (many business people, some politicians, and a few teacher educators) seek only that teachers be able to produce good test results with students and care little about how such teachers are prepared or what kind of

continuing development they might have. The central issue, this group contends, is providing rewards and penalties for teachers and tying these forms of motivation to student test results. Overlap exists between these results-oriented people and the group I have termed conservative activists.

Establishment critics, therefore, tend to have a shared dislike for the reform thrusts of the teacher education establishment, especially the faith in regulation embedded in these reform thrusts, but these critics have little else in common.

It is not surprising, therefore, that teacher education reform in the United States is by no means a coherent and integrated effort. Rather, there are tensions between state and national control, between private (professional) and public control of teacher education, between whether greater or lesser regulation is the proper lever for reform, and a disagreement among proponents of deregulation about just what is to be deregulated and why. There is no master plan for the reform of U.S. teacher education; rather there are a set of contending proposals, each with its own agenda and its own definition of what problem(s) needs to be addressed.

Reform Thrusts in U.S. Teacher Education

With this context for reform in U.S. teacher education, I turn now to describing and analyzing several reform thrusts in

U.S. teacher education. In each case I try to summarize the reform thrust, identify its assumptions about the character of the problem, and pin point the current status of this reform thrust. The extent to which there may be parallels to the New South Wales experience is for the reader to explore. I hope that my description and analysis of these U.S. reform thrusts provides some ideas for you to consider.

I have decided to discuss four teacher education reform movements, each of which seems to have a distinctive platform but also has interconnections with other reform thrusts. As a result, these reform movements may not be as separate as my individual discussion of them seems to suggest, yet to combine these thrusts would lead to an unwieldy and ultimately vacuous discussion of teacher education reform in the U.S. For these reasons, I introduce and discuss the various reform thrusts as if they are independent. As appropriate, I will comment on the interconnections across reform movements. At the same time, I frequently cannot discuss teacher education reform in the U.S. without mention of reform at the K-12 level, since the two are often interlocked due to an increasing tendency for teacher educators to be held directly accountable for the teachers they prepare and even for the success of these teachers with K-12 students.

The four thrusts which I have selected for brief discussion are: standards and accountability, alternative teacher

certification, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Most of my discussion -- but not all (see, for example, National Board certification) -- will concentrate on the preparation of prospective teachers. One of the major shortcomings of reform thinking in the U.S. is that insufficient attention is being given to the continuing development of teachers, particularly in a period of growing teacher shortages. Even the integration of new teachers into the profession and their retention in teaching are being largely ignored in reform thinking. This latter omission is occurring despite the awareness that about 50% of beginning teachers will leave the teaching profession within five years.

Standards and Accountability

The standards movement originated at the K-12 level of education, and can be dated from the aforementioned report, A Nation at Risk. The "rising tide of mediocrity" phrase captured what was to become the battle cry of many critics that the public schools were failing to offer the kind of rigorous academic training which U.S. students needed to survive and prosper in the highly competitive world economy. Out of this widely felt discomfort with the public schools grew the standards movement, initially a national movement and led by the various subject matter organizations. Foremost among these was the National Council for the Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), but many other

professional groups were involved, including the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS), and others. With the NCTM, the development of the math standards was really an attempt to rethink the nature of mathematics instruction, and the NCSS standards gained notoriety when conservative groups attacked these standards.

By the early 1990s, the political fights over differing conceptions of such subject matters as mathematics and social studies had become extreme, and it appeared that political warfare in K-12 schooling would be the major outcome of the standards movement. However, an interesting evolution occurred and moved the ideological battles in the various subject matter areas in an entirely different direction. From being considered as goals to be aspired to, the standards increasingly became viewed as criteria which must be fulfilled. This gradual change from being goals to being criteria meant that the standards were less and less an object of contestation and more and more a target to be achieved. The instrumental goal of efficiency -- how can we best accomplish particular standards -- increasingly took the place of the philosophical question of what standards ought we pursue.

Another important and closely related development was the vigorous attempts by the individual states to make educators and schools accountable for results. When the subject matter standards first arrived on the scene, the typical presumption was

that individual school districts would, as best they could, use standards from various subject matter professional groups to rethink and reinvigorate local school curricula. However, the number and complexity of the subject matter standards was overwhelming, and most local school districts were puzzled about what to do with this mass of standards. The growing concern for accountability provided a wedge for state intervention into the standards arena; an individual state could assume the task of making sure that kids were learning the subject area knowledge which was embedded in the standards.

State legislatures, however, did not necessarily have in mind a broad conception of education, and the rich subject matter content embedded in the standards was often reduced to the so-called "basics" for elementary and secondary school youngsters. Reading, arithmetic, and writing increasingly are the focus for state-level accountability in the elementary school, while science, social studies, and language arts -- possibly also computer literacy -- are added for the high school. In the U.S. the evolving pattern is state-level testing of subjects thought to embody the basics, with the idea that schools (and often teachers) should be rated and rewarded in relation to the test results of their students. The standards movement, which started out as an attempt to extend and deepen the teaching of the various subjects, has ended up as a device to measure the effectiveness and productivity of the public schools.

The implications of the K-12 standards movement for teacher education are substantial, though not completely clear at this point. For one thing, teacher educators need to prepare their prospective teachers to effectively convey the content which is contained in each state's set of assessments. This means, for example, that curriculum and methods instruction will be pressured to center on the content specifics of the state accountability standards for each tested subject. Thus, there is a lot of talk in the United States about aligning the teacher education curriculum with state standards, though this alignment usually focuses on study in Education rather than study in the Arts and Sciences. There is literally a professionalized view of subject matter which state officials and other policy makers expect to be conveyed in Education courses.

In addition, to make sure that teacher educators actually are preparing high quality teachers who will be able to hold K-12 students accountable for state-level standards, the idea of "report cards" for schools of education is sweeping the United States. In my state of North Carolina, for example, the State Board of Education adopted "rewards and sanctions" last September as part of a Performance Report for Schools of Education. Whether a school of education is rated as "exemplary" on this Report and therefore receives state funds to support scholarships for prospective teachers or receives sanctions which must be remediated through a written plan submitted to the Department of

Public Instruction depends on how well a school of education meets three criteria. The first criterion requires that a school of education must be accredited by NCATE (my state is one of the few which has required NCATE accreditation), as well as by the state of North Carolina. The second criterion relates to the quality of program completers, that is, the graduates of a program. Several of the indicators for this criterion concern how well program completers do on subject specialty and education tests which are part of PRAXIS Series developed by the Educational Testing Service. Other indicators relate to how satisfied program completers and their employers are with their teacher preparation programs, including their readiness to use technology in the classroom. The third criterion concerns the extent to which teacher education faculties have ongoing involvement with the public schools, including not only support for beginning teachers but also support for lateral entry (alternative certification) teachers.

The North Carolina state report card for teacher education programs is a parallel development to the national report card required by the Higher Education Act reauthorization (passed by Congress in fall of 1998). In the case of the national report card, statistics pertaining to teacher assessments and teacher licensure are to be presented in two forms. By October of 2000, each state is to make public a ranking of college and university teacher education programs based on the relative percentages of

prospective teachers who pass state licensure exams. In addition, all institutions of higher education are expected, by April of 2000, to report various kinds of assessment scores for graduates of their programs (Blair, 1999). These regulations will affect all teacher preparation programs that receive federal aid, literally all the approximately 1,300 institutions which prepare teachers in the U.S.

As noted in a journalistic account of the national report card, "the congressional mandate to make states and higher education more accountable for the quality of teacher programs came after years of complaints that teacher colleges have been unwilling to make the changes necessary to turn out competent educators" (Blair, p. 32). That schools of education are opposed to excellence in teacher education is widely believed among members of the general public. Teacher educators are presumed to be inadequately interested in high standards, unwilling to change their programming, and interested primarily in those regulations which maintain their own job security. In turn, K-12 teachers -- allegedly the products of weak and bureaucratic teacher education programs -- are widely viewed as lazy and unmotivated, inadequately interested in student outcomes, and not sufficiently concerned about the basics of education. People widely suspect that the low test scores of U.S. students in relation to students in many other parts of the world are the joint responsibility of K-12 teachers and university-based teacher educators.

A few years ago, many educators thought we had reached the climax of interest in a test-based view of accountability. Yet, we now see that the emphasis on testing is accelerating, not declining. Moreover, the use of these test results to evaluate and reward/punish K-12 schools/teachers is well under way, and the next step in the logic of accountability is to rate the relative quality of teacher education programming/teacher educators by comparing the test results of the teacher graduates of the various institutions in each state. Beneath this entire rating apparatus is a belief in the value of competition in education; the good is presumed to be capable of driving out the bad, or of leading the bad to reform itself. At the same time, the rewards and punishments for both K-12 schooling and teacher education programs are presumed to bring a business-like efficiency to the endeavors of schooling and teacher preparation. The word on every policy maker and educator's lips in the U.S. is "high-stakes" testing.

Although there is little systematic inquiry into the effects of high-stakes testing in teacher education, a substantial body of research examines the impact of such testing in K-12 schooling. High-stakes testing, for example, has been found to narrow the public school curriculum to the content which is tested (e.g., Madaus, 1988), to lead to an emphasis on test preparation skills (e.g., Danielson, 1999; Jones, Jones, Hardin, Chapman, Yarbrough, & Davis, 1999), and to negatively affect

teacher and administrator morale, even for when state standards are met (Danielson, 1999). Thus it is relatively safe to predict that teacher education curricula will increasingly emphasize the content tested on the PRAXIS Series and other adopted assessments for prospective teachers, that teacher educators will increasingly tailor their instruction to the actual format of the test items, and that an overall malaise will increasingly envelop those who work in teacher education programs. Certainly, it is possible to use these high stakes assessments to control the content and delivery of teacher education programming, though that is by no means the goal of all who wish to reform teacher education through an emphasis on standards.

One of the ironies of the standards and accountability movement is that many proponents of standards do not come from the "punitive" tradition which I have stressed in this brief analysis. On the contrary, some of the strongest advocates for standards have a commitment to high standards for all students and are motivated by their desire to have students not currently being served well by our educational system achieve as well as middle class white students (Valli, in press). Standards in this context are meant to counteract the low expectations which many teachers have historically had for minority and working class youth.

Another element of the argument made by some standards proponents is that these standards provide a focal point for

teacher education -- a sense of what content, ideas, and skills teachers need to be prepared to offer the young. Yet, a review of the state standards in North Carolina suggests that such standards are too numerous and fragmented to offer a focused direction for teacher education programming, and I suspect a similar situation holds in many other states. In addition, the standards movement seems as likely to lead to blaming minority and low socio-economic students for their low test scores as to holding the educational system accountable for providing high quality teachers and financial resources to poor urban and rural school districts.

Alternative Teacher Certification

If standards and accountability represent mainstream thinking among reformers outside the teacher education establishment, as well as representing the thinking of many teacher educators, there is another group of reformers outside the establishment who have much more ambitious aspirations than controlling the direction and content of teacher education programming. Simply put, these reformers want to control teacher education directly, and their mechanism for taking control of teacher education is the idea of drastic deregulation.

For example, last April the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, under the presidency of Chester Finn, issued a report which Education Week characterized as, "Deregulation Urged to Enrich Teacher Corps" (Archer, 1999). This manifesto, titled "The

Teachers We Need and How to Get More of Them," was signed by a group composed of conservative scholars, education officials, and state policymakers. According to this group, too much attention is given by current discussions of teacher quality to "inputs, such as the kinds of education courses prospective teachers need to take before they can become licensed" (Archer, 1999, p. 3). In contrast, the manifesto argues that states should set only minimal standards for those seeking to enter teaching: an undergraduate degree, a solid general education, deep subject-matter knowledge, and no record of misbehavior (Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 1999).

This highly deregulatory approach to identifying high quality teachers presumes several things. First, "outstanding candidates are often discouraged by the hurdles that the regulatory strategy loves to erect" (Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 1999, p. 7). Here the focus is on the cost and time that conventional teacher preparation takes to complete, as well as the alleged "Mickey Mouse" nature of this preparation. Bright students, so the reasoning goes, are deterred from becoming licensed teachers by this mundane and lengthy preparation. A second presumption is that the hurdles in the current regulatory approach do "not even do a good job of screening out ill-prepared candidates" and are, in any case, inappropriately focused on inputs having to do with nature of teacher preparation. Let teachers into classrooms and then focus teacher evaluation "on

the only measure that really matters: whether pupils are learning" (Thomas B. Fordham, 1999, p. 5). Once in the classroom, therefore, we should reward and punish teachers according to the "bottom line" of student learning, much as we would might pay a worker by the piece rate or a salesperson on the basis of total sales.

The constellation of assumptions which guide the Fordham Foundation's attempt to increase teacher quality, as well as the measure of teacher quality itself, can be described as market oriented. Since the highly regulated system of teacher preparation is viewed as ineffective -- even injurious in its screening out of bright and creative people -- the Fordham Foundation argues for opening up access to teaching careers by letting any bright and knowledgeable person try her/his hand at public school teaching. Moreover, although acknowledging that some form of teacher preparation is likely to persist, the Fordham Foundation believes that "in a deregulated environment, good teacher education programs will thrive and prosper. Those that do a poor job will not, once they lose the protection that the regulatory monopoly confers on them" (Thomas B. Fordham, 1999, p. 10).

When teaching is radically deregulated, market forces can be easily applied to both candidates and programs. On the one hand, access is opened up for the presumed large number of talented candidates who have been excluded by the elaborate and self-

serving preparation programs of colleges of education. At the same time, the monopolistic power of these colleges is itself destroyed, and the basis is established for widespread experimentation in program design. This overall market approach is extraordinarily appealing to the general public in a country which is deeply individualistic and permeated by the capitalist ethic.

Whether the market assumptions underlying the deregulatory approach make sense is another matter. When the Fordham Foundation report was issued last April, Willis Hawley, a well-known educational researcher, said he did not see evidence of large numbers of talented people desiring to be teachers but being deterred from doing so by regulatory barriers (Archer, 1999). Consistent with his point of view is the growing teacher shortage in many subject areas and regions of the United States, despite the widespread implementation of alternative certification approaches. Access seems to be less of a factor in teacher supply and demand than is keeping new teachers in the profession, poor working conditions in schools, and presence of attractive alternative jobs to public school teaching.

However, the effect of the monopolistic power of colleges of education is harder to assess. Even if these programs are better than they once were, a contention of many teacher educators, there is minimal variation among teacher preparation programs in the United States. A high degree of regulation has had the

effect in the United States of fostering a dreary sameness in teacher education programming, a condition with a long history (Counts, 1965). Teacher educators typically wait to respond to new regulators promulgated by the state as opposed to initiating dramatic improvements on their own initiative (Tom, 1997). I do not mean to argue that with less regulation, varied and wonderful teacher education programming would immediately arise, and that "good" teacher education programs would drive out the "bad" ones. Orthodoxy in teacher education, however, could be more easily challenged if the regulatory yoke were loosened.

Under the general rubric of alternative certification are grouped a wide variety of efforts (Darling-Hammond, 1990). More than 80% of the states in the United States now have some form of alternative certification (Sandham, 1997), though reliable data on the nature of these programs is hard to obtain due to the rapidity with which states change their policies. Probably the only characteristic shared by these varied forms of alternative approaches is early involvement in teaching responsibility. Sometimes there is a 4-6 week preparatory summer workshop -- as in the widely known national endeavor called "Teach for America" (Kopp, 1994) -- but classroom placement, with full teaching responsibility, often occurs as soon as the alternative permit is obtained. Significant mentoring is frequently promised, but often not delivered (Darling-Hammond, 1994). States often require beginning teachers to engage in pedagogical study

parallel with their early years of teaching, and in some cases candidates with alternative (or emergency) permits have to complete the equivalent of a conventional teacher education program before obtaining a permanent license.

Alternative approaches, therefore, do not necessarily entail a rejection of professional training, but such approaches do differ from conventional campus-based programming about what it means to learn to teach. Most obviously, alternative certification presumes that if one knows a subject well, then one can teach that subject. In reality there is little disagreement between teacher educators and establishment critics over the critical importance of subject matter to successful teaching. The presumption which may have deeper implications for teacher education reform is the widely held theory among proponents of alternative certification that "teaching is a practical skill that is best learned on the job" (Stoddart and Floden, 1996). On this assumption, the disagreement is spirited, with little common ground between those who see the heavy and early reliance on experience as a return to the days of apprenticeship and those who see campus-based teacher education as much ado about nothing. One of the major and largely unrecognized contributions of alternative certification to teacher education reform is to raise the question of the place of teaching experience in learning to teach.

Discussion

In examining U.S. teacher education, I have thus far explored two reform thrusts which are operating substantially outside the teacher education establishment: alternative certification and standards and accountability. Alternative certification has always been outside the establishment, since the purpose from the beginning was to provide routes to teaching which obviated the need for conventional teacher education. On the other hand, the standards movement, as I indicated earlier, originated primarily inside the establishment when the major subject-matter associations formulated standards for the teaching and learning of particular subject matters.

By the mid-1990s, however, the standards approach was increasingly being merged with the idea of accountability, which in the United States is defined primarily in terms of student results on achievement tests. While we used to rely on such national achievement tests as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and view the results as information about the cognitive attainment of students, the recent transition toward state accountability has led many states to create their own tests and attach high stakes to the test results (the rating of schools and, increasingly, the ending of so-called "social promotion" of students). While these accountability trends are not yet as sharply cast as my analysis implies, I believe I have correctly identified the direction of unfolding trends in the United States.

Obviously, these trends pose real problems for the teacher

education establishment. Although alternative certification drops the barriers for certain people to enter the profession, conventional teacher education programs are required to keep in place the elaborate regulations set by individual states (and the standards of NCATE if the institution decides to seek national accreditation). Ironically, conventional teacher education programs are held to very regulations which are seen as unnecessary for alternative certification, even though some universities conduct both regular and alternative programming. In my state of North Carolina, there is pressure coming both from state officials and from representatives of the administration of the entire university system for our college of education to support and participate in alternative certification. At the same time, we are expected to maintain our regulation-saturated conventional programs.

An interesting contradiction occurs when North Carolina state officials (and the leadership of the university system) want an institution both to prepare teachers in conventional programs and to offer coursework for alternatively licensed teachers who are viewed as not needing a full program of teacher education. This apparent contradiction becomes less puzzling when one considers that a growing teacher shortage exists in North Carolina and that the preparation of teachers is a low status and perpetually underfunded endeavor. Alternatively licensed teachers in my state are being prepared on the cheap,

and few in leadership positions in North Carolina seem willing to commit the resources needed for first-rate teacher preparation.

State-based accountability also poses a threat for colleges of education. Increasingly, pressure will be exerted on colleges of education to have their prospective teachers be prepared to have future K-12 students pass the assessments of a specific state, and this pressure is likely to lead to the same kind of narrowing of the teacher education curriculum that K-12 assessments are engendering in the public school curriculum. The ability of colleges of education to have their students pass licensure tests -- either prepared by the Educational Testing Service or by a particular state -- will be enforced through the "report card" format discussed earlier.

Not willing to wait for the "report card" measure to take effect, many state legislatures are directly legislating the content and process of teacher education. For example, this past legislative session in Oklahoma, Senate Bill 715 "mandates 10 competencies be included in teacher preparation programs and defines seven methodologies to be used in achieving the competencies," and in Idaho, House Bill 178 establishes "a preservice assessment to determine the candidates knowledge of reading instruction and phonics" (Laitsch, 1999, p. 1, 7).

Although we might wish to believe that state legislatures are discharging their public responsibility to improve the education of teachers, the more likely motivation for their

legislative activity is the widespread lack of faith in colleges of education. Over the last two decades in the United States, attempts to legislate the details of teacher education reform have become common (e.g., Melnick, 1996; Warner, 1990). This same lack of faith about quality and vigor of teacher education was a guiding motive in the recent Congressional creation of the national "report cards" (Blair, 1999). It seems safe to predict that colleges of education are going to face increased state and Congressional regulation in the next few years. I turn now to an establishment attempt to respond to some of the criticisms of colleges of education: national accreditation.

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

NCATE is in the difficult role of both accrediting programs of teacher education and being a national spokesperson for these programs (and the institutions which house these programs). On a more pragmatic level, NCATE, as a private organization, is highly dependent for funding on the dues from those programs which it accredits; funding does come from those professional groups which are part of the NCATE organization (teacher educator groups, teacher unions, subject matter associations), as well as from foundation grants which NCATE has received in recent years. However, the financial dependence of NCATE on the institutions it accredits is a continuing problem and suggests a possible barrier to NCATE taking a tough stance on accreditation, though this potential conflict is not publicly admitted or addressed.

The way NCATE has tended to resolve the difficult tension between making judgments about institutions and providing support for these same institutions is for NCATE to proclaim its commitment to accrediting only high quality programming. "High quality" is a term which appears again and again in standards of NCATE (NCATE, 1997), and representatives of NCATE, as well as deans of education and other NCATE proponents, consistently have claimed (or implied) that NCATE has been much more rigorous during the 1990s in its application of NCATE standards than in earlier years. In truth, however, the rate of institutional rejection has been more-or-less constant over the past 25 years, and has rarely been more than 20% (Tom, 1996). When at least 80% of the programs are accredited, NCATE has difficulty claiming that it accredits only programs of the highest quality. In addition, my own experience on accreditation teams -- these teams are composed of teacher educators, other higher education faculty, and K-12 teachers -- suggests that many accredited programs are of mediocre quality.

In reality, NCATE accreditation serves as a minimal competency screen for teacher education programming -- not necessarily a bad idea when many aspects of program design are contestable and can be reasonably accomplished in a variety of ways (Tom, in press). NCATE would be prudent to admit that its real task has traditionally been to prevent weak programs from receiving the stamp of approval which goes along with national

accreditation. Yet, perhaps because the rhetoric of "high quality" is so built into the NCATE culture and perhaps because the attacks on teacher education are so virulent, NCATE, through its leadership and proponents, continues to contend that its primary task is to accredit only high quality programs.

The quixotic pursuit of high quality programming has led the NCATE procedures and standards to become more and more elaborate over the years. Thus, among the teacher education community one of the common criticisms of NCATE is that it takes extensive time and resources to prepare for and host an accreditation visit. Extensive background data must be gathered, detailed reports prepared and written, and plans must be made for the actual visit by the accreditation team. Partly due to this perceived high cost of NCATE accreditation and partly because NCATE is seen as overly intrusive in the programming of institutions, a rival accreditation organization is currently being established: the Teacher Education Advisory Council (Archer, 1998; Diez, 1998; Guy & Warren, 1998). TEAC brings together a combination of research-oriented universities and liberal arts colleges, a most unusual alliance. Substantial hostility exists between these two accrediting bodies, though NCATE and TEAC each more-or-less pretends that the other group does not exist.

NCATE is attempting to make the accreditation process performance-based, an idea which predates the formation of TEAC. Simply stated, performance-based accreditation -- identified as

NCATE 2000 -- "will require schools of education to provide performance evidence of candidate competence" (Wise, 1999). According to NCATE leadership, "multiple assessments of candidate performance will be the norm" (Wise & Gollnick, 1999, p. 5). An adequate performance-based system will include "assessments from internal sources" such as "grade point averages, examinations for entry, portfolios..., pre- and post samples of P-12 student work, lesson plans, analysis of student work and learning in a group situation over time, analysis of learning via a case study of a child, videos of classroom performance, written reflection on teaching performance, etc." At the same time, assessments from "external sources ... should include results on state licensure exams by field, placement rates, and employer evaluations, in addition to other measures" (Wise & Gollnick, 1999, p. 5).

"In preparation for the new accreditation system," according to NCATE leadership, "faculty are meeting in colleges of education to develop consensus on the knowledge, dispositions, and skills that candidates should possess" (Wise & Gollnick, 1999, p. 5). This description suggests some latitude will be given to teacher educators in colleges of education to formulate teacher education programs which are distinctive to a particular institution. However, a recent announcement by the Education Testing Service indicates that it has made "a partnership with NCATE to revise the [PRAXIS II] tests" (Bradley, 1999a, p. 18). These subject matter tests will be able to "assess prospective

teachers' understanding of their disciplines and how to teach those subjects to children" (p. 18), even though the tests will be paper and pencil efforts (a multiple choice and essay format) and cost no more than \$45 to \$60 (the current cost of PRAXIS II tests).

Is this plan for paper and pencil subject-matter tests really going to foster meaningful performance assessment of candidates? How many essays can be included with such a low testing fee? What will happen to all of the forms of internal assessment at an institution once there is an external test available? And, last, although not least, will the revised PRAXIS II tests essentially eliminate any variation among the programs of institutions, with each faculty of education becoming focused on teaching to the new set of subject-matter tests? Of course, there is the issue of whether states will adopt the PRAXIS II tests, but many states already use these tests from the Educational Testing Service not only for candidates from conventional programs but also for those candidates who enter alternative licensure arrangements. The most telling question, therefore, is whether these new tests have any chance of being meaningful performance measures, and whether these tests will act to further promote the standardization of teacher education.

Presuming that these tests can be adequate performance assessments and that other forms of performance assessment will not be lost once the revised tests from the Educational Testing

Service are available and are adopted by states, we are still well advised to wonder whether all the forms of NCATE regulation which focus on program content and procedures will be abandoned with the arrival of "performance assessment" through subject matter testing. Such a change should be effected, since the major rationale for adopting a performance assessment approach is that accreditation methods of the past have focused too much on inputs, i.e., specific content for Education courses, completion of certain clinical activities, particular admissions criteria for prospective teachers, and so forth. However, past experience in national accreditation suggests that once an area of teacher education programming is regulated, it is not likely that this form of regulation will be surrendered.

NCATE's interest in performance evaluation is largely restricted to the period of preservice teacher preparation, though this organization does review programs designed for the continuing education of teachers. A very interesting approach to performance evaluation, however, is occurring for those licensed teachers who want to establish that their expertise is greater than that of the ordinary licensed teacher. For this discussion, I turn to a relatively recent development in U.S. teacher policy: the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The approach of the National Board is both fascinating and raises the question of just what we mean by performance evaluation.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was created in 1987 after the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, an arm of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, released A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century. In this report, the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (1986, p. 3) called for the creation of a "National Board for Professional Teaching Standards ... to establish high standards for what teachers need to know and be able to do, and to certify teachers who meet that standard."

While also containing recommendations about preservice teacher education, the Carnegie report's longterm impact has been its recommendation that experienced teachers be able to qualify for a certificate analogous to what accountants can secure by becoming certified public accountants or what doctors can obtain by becoming board-certified. In this discussion I focus on the National Board certificate itself, but Blackwell and Diez (1998, 1999) contend that master's degree study for experienced teachers can be designed around National Board standards, and I (Tom, 1999) argue for a similar approach to the reform of advanced study for experienced teachers.

The National Board -- an independent and non-governmental organization -- is governed by a 63-member board of directors, a majority of whom must be classroom teachers. Any teacher who holds a baccalaureate degree, has taught for a minimum of three years, and has a valid state teaching license (or teaches in a

private school) is eligible to attempt National Board certification. (Candidates for National Board certification need not have graduated from an accredited teacher education program.) For the 1999-2000 year, 16 certificates are available, including, for example, Early Childhood/Generalist (ages 3-8), Early Adolescence/Science (ages 11-15), and Adolescence through Young Adulthood/English Language Arts (Ages 14-18+).

In discussing the reasons for the creation of a National Board from the perspective of the mid-1980s, Linda Darling-Hammond (1986, p. 76) believed that such a board was a "stroke of genius" which would furnish "means for professionalizing teaching beyond those provided by current state licensing tests."

Darling-Hammond continued by claiming that a National Board "would **professionally** define the body of knowledge on which good teaching rests" (p. 76). "Current tests," Darling-Hammond continued, "are not professionally controlled; nor do they adequately represent what a teacher needs to know about teaching and learning. That knowledge is complex, and requires judgment in applying general principles to unique and specific problems of practice; it cannot be tested by simplistic, multiple-choice representations of teaching situations. More important than pass rates and cut-off scores, a real test of professional knowledge could have a profound influence on teacher preparation, both before and during a teacher's career."

Darling-Hammond's high expectations for the National Board

have in part been realized. For example, the National Board has produced a more sophisticated approach to evaluating the quality of teaching than is characteristic of other forms of teacher assessment. A 1989 policy statement, "What Teachers Should Know And Be Able To Do," has served as a basis for the standards development and assessment work conducted by the National Board. This policy statement and the vision of teaching it describes are organized around five core propositions: 1) Teachers are committed to students and their learning; 2) Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students; 3) Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring students learning; 4) Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience; and 5) Teachers are members of learning communities. Working from these five core propositions, the National Board now grants 16 certificates, but as many as 10 certificates remain to be developed.

National Board assessments have two parts. First, teachers construct portfolios that describe and analyze their classroom practice. In these portfolios, candidates show evidence of their teaching expertise through the presentation of student work, the preparation of videotapes of classroom interaction, and the development of written commentaries which describe their teaching and how they think about this teaching. During the second part of the assessment, teachers attend an assessment center and complete exercises focused on content knowledge as well as on

age-appropriate and content-appropriate teaching strategies. Teachers demonstrate their teaching knowledge and strategies with written responses to prompts or stimulus materials, such as journal articles and student work samples. Teachers often report that participating in this two-part assessment process is the best professional development experience of their lives.

However, not all is going well with the National Board process. One problem already alluded to is the slow progress in developing the full complement of certificates for all teaching areas; over a 10-year period, with substantial funding, only 16 certificates have been designed. In a sense, this slow pace is understandable in that agreement on standards for each certificate and preparation of appropriate assessments for that certificate is a complex and time-consuming process.

An even more significant problem is the relatively small number of teachers who have taken and passed the National Board assessments. In 1996, for example, there were only 592 nationally board-certified teachers in the U.S., and this number is growing at a modest rate. The cumulative number of certificates grew to 912 by 1997, 1,836 by 1998, and in 1999, even with a tripling of successful candidates, there are only about 4,800 nationally board-certified teachers in the entire United States (Bradley, 1999b). These 4,800 teachers are a tiny fraction of the more than 3,000,000 teachers in the 50 states of the U.S.; they compose a mere .0016% of the overall teaching

force. It would take 300,000 teachers to achieve a 10% rate of certification, the size at which we might begin to think that National Board certification was having impact on the overall teaching profession.

Of the 4,800 board-certified teachers in 1999, over 25% (1,262) of them were from the state of North Carolina, a state which is only the tenth largest state by population. The apparent cause of this dramatic concentration of nationally board-certified teachers in a single state is North Carolina's willingness to pay the full fee of \$2,000. which must be paid by every teacher who seeks National Board certification. North Carolina also provides each board-certified teacher a 12% annual salary increment. Both of these incentives help explain the disproportionate number of board-certified teachers in North Carolina, and other local districts and states are also increasingly supporting registration fees and providing salary increments for successful candidates (Bradley, 1999b). But these incentives are by no means universal, and one must wonder why members of a low-paid profession would be willing to invest substantial financial resources in the pursuit of a certificate which often offers little more than higher status. The high cost of certification is understandable in light of the sophistication of the National Board assessments, but this cost cannot be borne primarily by K-12 teachers, especially if increased salaries are not directly tied to achievement of board certification.

These three problems with National Board certification -- the slow development of certificate areas, the small number of certified teachers, the high cost of the assessment process to teachers -- are all problems which grew out of National Board process or might reasonably have been anticipated to follow from that process. A fourth problem, however, is something which Darling-Hammond and other supporters of the National Board could not have foreseen in the mid-1980s: the accountability movement. Earlier I described how the accountability movement was started by the desire of professional associations to have subject-matter standards, but increasingly is controlled by individual states which want teaching quality measured in terms of a teacher's ability to produce student results on state-mandated K-12 assessments.

This state accountability movement poses an obvious question for the National Board: do the students of board-certified teachers do better on state assessments than do the students of other teachers. This question is especially important to state legislators who are reluctant to provide financial support for the National Board registration fee or to increase state funding for teacher salaries unless board-certified teachers are distinctly better than other teachers, i.e., produce more student learning on state assessments. Since National Board standards and assessments have been focused, from the beginning, on teacher knowledge and skill, the National Board has no concrete response

to how well board-certified teachers are able to increase student test results on state assessments. Some educators argue that such a select group as nationally board-certified teachers -- much less than 1% of the U.S. teaching force -- are so good that studies confirming the success of their students on state assessments are going to be easy to produce.

While this prediction may be true, we need to take a deeper look at this issue of student outcomes. The emphasis by accountability proponents on teachers' effects on student learning suggests that differing assumptions about teacher quality underlie state accountability and National Board certification. As earlier outlined by Darling-Hammond (1986, p. 76), the National Board asserts that the key to professionalizing teaching is the identification of a "body of knowledge" and how that knowledge is applied to concrete teaching situations. Darling-Hammond stresses professional judgment as key to this view of teaching quality: "That [body of] knowledge is complex, and requires judgment in applying general principles to unique and specific problems of practice...." Moreover, this knowledge and the conditions of its application are to be identified by teachers themselves; Darling-Hammond put the word "professionally" in italics to emphasize the control that teachers should have in establishing the nature of teaching expertise.

State-driven accountability, however, is definitely not

under the control of the teaching profession. In fact, state officials often perceive teachers to be part of the problem which must be rectified through a strong emphasis on whether teachers can actually produce student outcomes. Neither do advocates of state accountability view professional judgment or any body of professional knowledge as markers of teaching quality. Simply put, the logic of state accountability plays to the entrenched American idea that the only thing which counts is results -- the proof is in the pudding, not the recipe.

National Board proponents presume that teachers who are knowledgeable and have good professional judgment will be effective, while state accountability proponents believe that the best indicator of teaching effectiveness is the ability to achieve results with students. Of these two views of teaching quality, the logic of state accountability is simpler to understand and has fewer elements, and this results-oriented view seems to be winning the battle over how teaching quality is to be judged in the United States.

Discussion

The strength of the state accountability movement also has implications for how performance assessment will be defined over the next few years. Currently the idea of performance assessment can be used to include a range of performances, as indicated by NCATE's appeal in NCATE 2000 to multiple assessments of preservice candidates and the National Board's similar emphasis

on the knowledge and skills of experienced teachers. But the growing power of state accountability suggests that the purview of performance assessment will become narrower, something already underway in the recent alliance between NCATE and the Educational Testing Service to create a simple and cheap test to assess a prospective teacher's knowledge of subject matter. While the Educational Testing Service has long produced simplistic tests of teacher competence, the new alliance is the first time that the major national accrediting body for teacher education has joined in such an effort.

The narrowing of performance assessment is likely to occur in two ways: a reduced range of teacher knowledge and skill, and an expanded emphasis on student results. As already suggested, rather than including a varied set of assessments of teacher knowledge and skill, performance assessment will likely be reduced to some kind of straightforward test of teacher knowledge similar to what appears to be unfolding with the revision of Praxis II. The fact that this revision is occurring in concert with the major national accrediting body in teacher education is indicative of the power of the appeal for having a simple way to assess teacher knowledge. A major bulwark against reducing the range of teacher knowledge and skills to be assessed is the work of the National Board. For experienced teachers, comprehensive assessments of teacher knowledge and skill are in place and are being used. However, these assessments are not developed for all

teaching areas, are being pursued by a small number of teachers, and are expensive. The longterm viability of the National Board is yet to be established, despite its substantial financial support over the past 10 years.

The decline (or demise) of the National Board would further the second form of narrowing performance assessment -- a decline of interest in assessing teacher knowledge and skill with a concurrent increased emphasis in judging teacher quality through student results. I have spoken at length about the growing trend in the United States toward defining teacher quality in terms of the student results obtained on tests so little more need be said here. However, it is important to note that the growing emphasis on viewing student results as **the** measure of teacher quality seems to lessen the need for any form of assessing teacher knowledge and skill to the point of making such assessment unnecessary.

Assertions and Questions

When I started to write this paper, I hoped to conclude with specific recommendations which might avoid or mitigate the difficulties which have accompanied recent attempts to reform teacher education in the United States. With some luck, I thought I might also be able to offer suggestions based on the limited number of promising practices which have accompanied this reform. These goals were probably too ambitious, but I do want

to help those of you in New South Wales think about your review and reform efforts in productive ways. How might I do this?

Something more than a summary of the U.S. reform experienced is needed. To highlight key points and stimulate thought and discussion, I have decided to offer a set of assertions which grow out of my analysis of the four reform thrusts. I also offer several questions which may help teacher educators (and others) address the policy issues which have grown out of the U.S. experience in teacher education reform.

The assertions are, I think, accurate, and they do have implications for how we think about and respond to the current reform context in teacher education. Here are my assertions:

- 1) An immense difference exists between standards considered as goals and standards viewed as criteria which must be fulfilled.
- 2) Once an attempt to rethink and improve the K-12 curriculum, the standards movement is increasingly being used to measure the efficiency and productivity of the public schools and of the teachers who work in these schools.
- 3) State-driven accountability is consistent with -- and will foster the development of -- a professionalized view of

subject matter in teacher education programs.

4) Regulation can produce change in teacher education, but it also often has the hidden and undesirable effect of encouraging passivity among teacher educators.

5) A professional view of accountability must include more than student results, unless education is to be considered identical with training.

6) Using alternative certification to open access to K-12 teaching will not appreciably alter the balance of supply and demand for teachers, unless more attention is given to the working conditions and low salaries of K-12 teachers.

7) While proponents of alternative certification stress the importance of subject matter expertise, they also hold a radically different theory about the role of teaching experience in learning to teach.

8) To have both alternative certification and national board certification in the same profession reveals an internal contradiction and/or reflects how varied are the views and assumptions of reformers.

9) While a private accrediting agency such as NCATE can avoid some of the heavy-handed regulation associated with governmental agencies, this form of accreditation is also voluntary and therefore has limited power to enforce change.

10) In the context of accountability for results, performance assessments will eventually become standardized measures of client outcomes.

11) Accreditation standards tend to collect in a cumulative manner, unless some basic paradigm shift occurs in what is viewed as important for teachers to know and be able to do.

Here are the questions in which I try to pinpoint key policy issues in teacher education reform:

12) What balance ought there be in teacher education between state regulation and institutional autonomy?

13) What common intellectual ground, if any, can be found for cooperation among those interested in teacher education reform?

14) Why do issues of substantive reform in teacher education so often get converted into instrumental tasks?

15) Is it possible to conceive of a form of "report card" for schools of education which would encourage and support teacher education reform?

16) If teacher educators were to be paid by the results they achieve, what results would they be judged on? How would this judgment be made?

17) If punitive measures are unlikely to motivate teacher educators, what policy initiatives might encourage teacher educators to reform their programs and reward these educators for making important improvements?

18) What teacher education inputs ought to be regulated? Which outputs? Ought we be seeking a balance between the two, or will any attempt to balance the regulation of inputs and outputs naturally lead to overregulation?

19) What might be done to increase public confidence in faculties from schools of education so that ideas initiated by these faculties would have a better chance to influence teacher education policy?

20) Ought national program accreditation be focused on approving only programs of the highest quality (a very

appealing goal) or on denying approval to programs of low quality (a more realistic and defensible goal)? What are the political barriers to using a minimalist approach?

21) How should performance assessment be construed in the context of preservice teacher education? In the context of staff development?

22) How might the standards of the National Board be used as a basis to design master's degree study for experienced teachers (or other forms of staff development for teachers)?

23) Ought teacher education programs be accountable for preparing teachers whom the public can be assured will be able to produce student learning?

These questions and assertions focus on important policy issues in U.S. teacher education reform, and I hope they are useful for thinking about the reform climate in New South Wales.

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